

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2005: The New Guys

Royal Rumble 2005

Date: January 30, 2005

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross, Tazz

It's time for a new set of guys to take their place on top of the company and what better time to do that than at the Rumble? Other than the Rumble, we've got the final blowoff of Orton vs. HHH in a feud that still makes me shake my head to this day. Also it's Big Show vs. JBL vs. Angle for the Smackdown Title in a match that sounds so uninteresting I'd rather watch last year's show all over again. Let's get to it.

The opening video is designed like a clock counting down in the Rumble. Cool idea there.

I almost forgot: this is the West Side Rumble, which is actually designed on a theme of West Side Story, as in gangs of Raw and Smackdown guys snapping their fingers and singing. Remember that THIS was considered the best idea and that someone received a paycheck for doing this. Let that sink in when you're unemployed next time.

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Edge is mad that he didn't get the title shot at Taboo Tuesday and is finally turning heel, which he would be for years to come. Edge jumps Shawn before Shawn can take off his vest, only to get sent back to the floor by Shawn. Back in and Shawn chops away in the corner but Edge comes back with a swinging neckbreaker to take over. Edge is embracing the evil here and pokes Shawn in the eye but it only ticks Shawn off, resulting in a Thesz Press by Shawn.

The Canadian is sent back to the floor but he catches Shawn in an Edge-0-Matic to take over again. A baseball slide keeps Shawn down and we head

back inside. The fans are firmly behind Shawn here, which means the heel turn is working for Edge. Shawn tries a standing rana but gets caught in a powerbomb for two instead. Off to a rear naked choke from Edge which stays on for a good while.

As Shawn fights up, Edge slams him right back down to stop the comeback before doing Shawn's pose. Shawn gets guillotined on the top but Edge jumps into a punch to the ribs for two. Shawn counters a belly to back suplex into a cross body for two but Edge clotheslines him right back down. We hit the chinlock again although for far less time here. Michaels comes back with an atomic drop and they mistime something pretty badly with Shawn waiting on one side of the ring while Edge stumbles around on the other side.

Anyway Shawn pounds away in the corner and grabs a rollup for two, prompting Edge to try to walk out. The imbecile of a referee holds Shawn back, allowing Edge to sneak up from behind and spear Shawn to the floor. Shawn finally crawls back in and Edge dances a bit. Edge tunes up the band and spears Shawn down for two more, sending Edge into a fit. He pulls his own hair out and does those awesome facials that only Edge can do.

With nothing else to try, Edge puts Shawn on top for a superplex, only to get knocked down for the flying elbow from Shawn. Sweet Chin Music is countered into an electric chair drop for two more and Edge is very frustrated. Edge rolls through a sunset flip into the Edgeucator (imagine a Sharpshooter but with Edge behind Shawn like an ankle lock) but Shawn makes the rope. After a small package gets two for Shawn, Edge reverses a rollup into one of his own and grabs the ropes for the cheap pin.

Rating: B-. Decent match here but at nearly 20 minutes it's too long. I'm not sure if I like the ending or not either, as Edge cheating shows that he's embracing the heel turn, but I don't think cheating and then hitting a move like another spear would have been a bad choice either. Still though, solid way to further Edge's turn and a very long opener, which isn't a terrible idea.

Teddy and Eric banter about who is going to win. Apparently we're doing

the old school tumbler thing to draw numbers with. Flair and Eddie come in (Flair hits on Torrie of course) to draw and Flair is very happy with his number. Eddie is disappointed, so he picks Flair's pocket and steals his number. See, THIS is the kind of stuff we need more of. It enforces Eddie's character and is funny at the same time, unlike the stupid stuff we get today that doesn't help anyone.

Heidenreich is panicking about caskets when Snitsky comes up. Heavy breathing ensues and Snitsky says he has an idea.

We recap Heidenreich vs. Undertaker. Basically Heidenreich wants to replace Undertaker is his chance in a casket match. Most people didn't think much of Heidenreich and they would wind up being proven correct. He would be followed by Great Khali in the long line of strange guys to face Undertaker.

The casket is brought out.

Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Taker grabs a headlock to start and pulls Heidenreich towards the casket but (Jon) Heidenreich runs away. That works so well that we do it again and Jon is terrified. Since that didn't quite work, Taker hooks the leg with a half crab, causing Heidenreich to crawl towards the ropes in front of the casket. As we ignore the problem of crawling to the ropes, Jon bails to the floor to take the fight out there.

Heidenreich sends Taker into the casket and pounds his head into it, which apparently isn't a problem for him. Back in and Heidenreich pounds away in the corner, only to get caught in a modified triangle choke. Taker pulls the hold down to the mat and Heidenreich is almost out, so here's Snitsky to break up the hold. After a double suplex to Taker, the monsters start pulling him to the casket....which has Kane inside.

Kane, who was feuding with Snitsky over Snitsky punting a plastic version of the baby that Kane's wife Lita (just go with it) lost, destroys both guys and takes Snitsky into the crowd. Heidenreich starts shoving the casket away very slowly before slamming Taker into the steps. Heidenreich slides the casket into Taker, which looks rather stupid as Taker had

nothing behind him to be crushed against but whatever.

Back in and Jon puts on a cobra clutch which chokes Taker out enough to get him into the casket. Well mostly in at least as Taker sticks an arm out and chokes away. With Heidenreich's torso in the casket, Taker drops the apron legdrop in the spot of the match. Back in and Heidenreich is suddenly fine, pounding away on the Dead Man and hitting a Boss Man Slam for a cover. Taker chokes his way out of the casket and wins a slugout, followed by a bad running DDT. Chokeslam and tombstone hit and we're done.

Rating: D. This just didn't work. At the end of the day, Heidenreich just didn't work at all and he never came close to it. This was supposed to be a preview of Snitsky/Heidenreich vs. Kane/Taker at Mania, but thankfully they went with Kane in MITB and Taker vs. Orton in a great match, whereas Snitsky and Heidenreich didn't even make it onto the show.

Teddy yells at Eddie to get Flair's number back. Evolution comes in and a beatdown nearly ensues. Eddie has to give the number back, and he throws in Flair's wallet too. Batista is going to go draw for the Rumble but HHH wants to talk about the match with Orton. Tensions flare but Flair calms things down. I think I smell a showdown.

Christian is here to draw his number and he's well pleased. Cena shows up and hits on Christy but Christian isn't pleased. He says rapping isn't hard and challenges Cena to a battle rap. Tomko won't give Christian a beat so he has to go it alone. Christian actually rhymes a bit but can't rhyme charisma. Cena makes gay jokes and isn't nearly as funny as Christian.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Big Show vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

This match has a backstory that isn't important enough to explain to us. Apparently Angle had a last man standing match with JBL but the winner is even less important than the backstory. JBL is defending. Angle bails to the floor to start so Show runs over JBL a few times. There's the loud chop in the corner followed by a legdrop which finally draws Angle into the ring for a save.

Now it's Kurt getting a big chop in the corner. Cole says that's like getting hit in the chest with a skillet. My question continues to be: how does anyone know what that feels like? Is that what goes on at WWE headquarters when there aren't any shows on? Show clotheslines both guys to the floor to a surprisingly big reaction. Angle tries a German on the floor which fails completely, so Show picks up the steps.

Show loads up the announce table and climbs the steps to chokeslam JBL through said table. Before he can though, Angle hits Show low and blasts him with a monitor, knocking Show through the table. Back inside and Angle puts JBL in an armbar followed by a keylock. Kurt rolls the Germans but walks into a big boot for two. Big Show gets back in and there's a double clothesline and headbutts all around. He slams Angle onto JBL to a big reaction. When did Big Show get this popular? Both guys get crushed in the corner and another double clothesline puts both guys down.

Show loads up a double chokeslam but the other guys go High/Low to take Show down. Angle Germans JBL down and hits a bad Angle Slam which gives JBL two. There's a chokeslam to JBL but he gets a foot on the rope. Out to the floor and Show spears JBL through the barricade in his signature spot, putting all three guys down.

Back in and Angle goes after Show with a chair but gets flapjacked face first onto the steel. Mark Jindrak and Luther Reigns, Angle's lackeys, come out for the save as JBL's Cabinet try to wake up the champion. Show beats up Jindrak and Reigns as Orlando Jordan puts JBL in the ring for the Clothesline to pin Angle to retain.

Rating: C+. This is one of those matches I was expecting to suck but it wound up being pretty solid. Angle is going to be good no matter what he does and Show had some solid motivation out there for a change. JBL escaping with the title was a recurring theme for nearly a year until he ran into a buzzsaw called John Cena in a few months. Shockingly good match here.

Batista won't sign Carlito's petition to get rid of Teddy Long. Carlito loads up the apple, looks at Batista, and swallows. Funny bit.

Batista goes to draw his number and hears Bischoff bar Evolution from

ringside for the next match. Big Dave seems very happy to tell HHH.

Long video recapping HHH vs. Orton. They hate each other, Orton was never supposed to get another shot, so tonight he gets another shot.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Randy Orton

HHH is defending. This is when Orton was still young and a not quite plucky face. He punches Orton to the floor and gets two off a dropkick back inside. HHH pounds away in the corner but gets caught in Snake Eyes to stop him cold again. Orton tries the RKO again but gets dumped to the floor, which thankfully doesn't break his shoulder again. HHH sends him into the steps and heads back in for some knees to Orton's back.

The Game goes after the taped up knee and wraps it around the post because he can. HHH modifies the cannonball down onto the leg by dropping an elbow instead of sitting on it. After a quick attempt at a small package by Orton, HHH puts on a LONG Figure Four, lasting way longer than almost any other I can remember. Orton finally turns it over, sending HHH retreating to the floor.

Orton sends him over the announce table and pounds away before heading back in for his backbreaker. A swinging neckbreaker gets two for Orton as does a regular one. The powerslam by Orton gets two as he doesn't seem interested in selling the knee at all. HHH counters punching in the corner into an atomic drop to slow things down again. HHH goes up top for no apparent reason and gets armdragged down, allowing Orton to hit a top rope cross body (his old finisher) for two.

Orton counters a Pedigree attempt into a catapult but HHH counters the RKO for at least the third time before hitting the high knee for two. Randy is bleeding from the lip. The Pedigree is escaped again and Orton gets two off a clothesline. The champ rolls to the floor again and gets sent into the steps for trying to hide. Back in and Orton pounds away in the corner, only to miss a DDT attempt and possibly give himself a concussion.

The referee looks at Orton to stall even more, as I think they're going for some big emotional moment where Orton fights through adversity. HHH

charges at Orton and knocks out the referee at the same time. It's hammer time but HHH misses his charge and hits the post. Back inside and Orton gets the hammer, only to have his head taken off by a clothesline. HHH throws away the hammer and hits the Pedigree to retain.

Rating: D+. As usual, these two do not work well together at all. This was one of their worse matches too, as Orton never seemed to have HHH even remotely in danger at all. At the end, HHH had Orton dead to rites for a long time and won clean (he never used the hammer) with a Pedigree. Orton's face push was killed dead here so he had to turn heel and feud with the Undertaker soon after this. Not a good match and kind of headscratching booking.

Angle literally steals Nunzio's number and spot in the Rumble.

Teddy tells JBL and company that Jibbles has to defend the title against Big Show in a barbed wire steel cage match at No Way Out.

Royal Rumble

Eddie Guerrero is #1 and Benoit is #2. Dang Benoit is on a run of bad luck in these things. I think we've got 90 second intervals again here. Feeling out process to start and they get into a technical standoff of course. Eddie hooks one of the few chinlocks in Rumble history until Daniel Puder, the winner of Tough Enough 4 (beating Mike MIZanin in the finals) is #3. He gets on the mic and says that he'll be the first Tough Enough Champion to win the Rumble, drawing "are you serious" glares from Benoit and Eddie.

Benoit and Eddie fire off chops in the corner followed by a double suplex because they can. Eddie hits Three Amigos and Hardcore Holly is #4. Holly asks if he can have some fun with Puder and rips some skin off with chops in the corner. Benoit and Eddie get in some chops of their own before Holly kicks Puder low, hits the Alabama Slam, and throws him out. Hurricane is #5 as Guerrero and Benoit dump Holly.

Hurricane gets double teamed but Eddie tries a double cross, only to get chopped for his efforts. Hurricane hits a Blockbuster on Eddie but Benoit chops him down and whips him into Eddie for the elimination. Kenzo Suzuki

(one of the most forgettable footnotes in wrestling history) is #6. Just like everyone else, Benoit and Eddie pound on him in the corner with chops and suplexes, but Benoit turns on Eddie ala earlier but only throws him to the apron.

Edge is #7 to a BIG pop. He beats on everyone in sight but gets clotheslined down by Benoit. Rey Mysterio is #8 and my goodness does Suzuki look out of place in there. Thankfully Rey headscissors him out about twenty seconds after entering, getting us down to an AWESOME tag match if they ever got around to doing it. Edge goes after Guerrero and here's Shelton Benjamin, the current IC Champion and on pure fire at this point, at #9.

There isn't a bad combination in the ring at the moment. Benoit tries to dump Rey but Eddie tries to put both of them out. Shelton can't eliminate Edge so he walks into a headscissors from Rey instead. Here's Booker at #10 to keep the talent level high. Question for discussion: who is the worst worker in the ring at the moment? Here's Eric Bischoff to cheer on the Raw guys as Benoit puts Eddie in a Boston Crab.

Jericho is #11 to a BIG pop. Teddy Long comes out to cheer as well as various people beat on each other. Luther Reigns is #12 to stop the hot streak dead. With four Raw guys (Benoit, Edge, Jericho and Benjamin) and four Smackdown guys (Booker, Luther, Mysterio and Guerrero), it's time for a showdown ala the West Side Rumble that the show is based on. That's a cool idea in theory, but what happened to the "every man for himself" concept?

Muhammad Hassan is #13 and the match stops cold. Everyone surrounds Hassan and the group beatdown is on. The fans REALLY dig this, which says a lot about Hassan's potential. He was going to win the world title over Batista in Washington DC at Summerslam, but real life issues got in his way. Hassan is out in less than a minute and here's Orlando Jordan at #14. Tazz says we can compare Jordan to Benjamin. Other than a good look, talent, charisma or fan interest, they are indeed neck and neck.

Scotty 2 Hotty is #15 but Hassan jumps him in the aisle, keeping him from ever getting into the ring. Taker beat him down in the aisle in 2002 also

so it's not the best even for Mr. Hotty. The ring is getting too full now but most of the guys are talented enough that I can live with it. Charlie Haas is #16 and Luther is put out by Booker, as is Jordan. That clears things out a bit. Booker stops for a Spinarooni and charges into a low bridge from Eddie to get rid of him.

Renee Dupree is #17, giving us Benoit, Guerrero, Edge, Mysterio, Haas, Jericho, Benjamin and Dupree. The World's Greatest Tag Team hits their Shelton jumps over Charlie spot to Renee but Shelton misses a splash in the corner and gets dumped by Edge. Simon Dean is #18 but he stops to do exercises on the floor before getting in. JR goes off on him in a funny bit. Eddie stops to look at him and Edge dumps Guerrero as a result.

Shawn is #19 and superkicks Simon out, doing some Hindu Squats to celebrate. Edge tries to corner Mysterio in a corner. JR: "Makes a lot of sense." Shawn backdrops Charlie out and Kurt Angle is #20. He hits Angle Slams on everything in sight but tries the ankle lock on Shawn. Michaels rolls through and superkicks Angle out after less than 40 seconds. Coach is #21 and you can hear JR groan. He gets in a single shot on Benoit and runs to hide.

Edge tries to put Mysterio out and here's Jindrak at #22. Angle comes back in and dumps Michaels before blasting him with the steps and putting him in the ankle lock. I'm thinking we need a masterpiece at Wrestlemania to settle this. Viscera is #23 and he pounds on everyone in sight. Paul London is #24 and nearly slides out of the ring from sliding in so far. Dupree takes him down but stops to dance, allowing Jericho to dump him.

London gets sent to the apron but slides back in as Cena (BIG pop) is #25. He gets in a shot on everyone and backdrops Viscera out. Cena and Benoit slug it out as Snitsky is #26. He's still kind of a threat at this point and runs over everyone in sight. London gets knocked to the apron again and hit with a HUGE clothesline for an even bigger backflip off the apron to the floor. That made a lot of highlight reels.

Snitsky and Cena stare each other down and John takes a big boot. Kane is #27 complete with pyro. Tazz: "WHY DO I HAVE TO SIT OVER HERE??? THIS IS NUTS!!!" Chokeslams all around as London is taken out on a stretcher.

Jindrak goes out thanks to Kane and Coach of all people tries to avenge him. Batista is #28 and the pop that Cena got looks like a whimper. Snitsky is gone immediately and it's time for a showdown with Kane. The crowd is WAY into Batista as he powerbombs Kane.

There goes Jericho thanks to Big Dave but Edge hangs on. Christian is #29 and he goes right after Cena. Cena is all like BRING IT ON and stomps Christian down in the corner. Rey hits a 619 on Kane and Cena FU's the monster out. Flair is #30, giving us a final group of Benoit, Edge, Mysterio, Coach, Cena, Batsita, Christian and Flair. Not bad at all with one exception. Evolution teams up for a spinebuster on Coach for the elimination before doing the same to Christian.

Benoit chops away at Flair but walks into a spinebuster and the elimination by Ric. Flair goes for a toss out of Batista but gets glared at in response. Edge and Mysterio dropkick Batista down and Edge dumps Flair, getting us down to Edge, Mysterio, Cena and Batista. Edge spears Cena and Batista down but Mysterio avoids the one coming at him. There's a 619 to the Canadian but a springboard legdrop misses and Edge spears Rey out. Edge charges at Cena and we're down to Cena vs. Batista.

The fans REALLY like this (and they're in red(ish) and blue to match their brands) and the staredown is on. Cena slaps away (clearly open handed) and tries the FU over the top but Batista blocks it. Dave loads up the Bomb but Cena fights out of it and they head to the ropes where both fall out, seemingly at the same time. Seriously, it's so close you can't fairly say one of them went out first.

We have a split decision, so here's Vince to charge out, slide into the ring....and destroy his knees and rip both of his quadriceps at the exact same time. While Vince sits on the mat (and hopefully doesn't seeing Batista dying laughing), both guys throw each other out and Vince restarts the match. Why this means we don't start with Benoit and Guerrero again isn't explained but it's spinebuster and elimination for Batista, sending Big Dave to the main event of Wrestlemania.

Rating: A-. I don't remember liking this as much the first time around but this was really good stuff. That segment in the first part with all

the talent was reminiscent of the 1990 edition where there was a string of incredibly talented guys to start things off. Then things slowed down a bit, but once Cena hit the crowd, who was already red hot all night, got turned up to white levels and things went through the roof. Goofy ending (which wasn't planned) aside, this was great stuff and a forgotten classic Rumble.

Overall Rating: B. This is a solid show overall with only the casket match being really bad. The Raw Title match isn't terrible but it's not worth watching either, especially with Orton's lack of selling being horrible. Batista and Cena would of course go on to Wrestlemania to win both world titles and dominate the company for years to come, making this a truly game changing show. Good stuff here and certainly worth seeing.

Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: B

Redo: B-

The Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Original: D-

Redo: D

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Big Show vs. Kurt Angle

Original: B

Redo: C+

HHH vs. Randy Orton

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Royal Rumble

Original: B-

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B

Like I said, I liked the Rumble a lot more this time around.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/24/royal-rumble-count-up-2005-the-rise-of-the-new-generation/>

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